

Illustrated Photo Effect

Here, we'll explore a cool technique for making a photo look like an illustrated image. The really cool thing about this technique is that you can apply it to just about any photo and get something interesting. In fact, I've used it so many times that I set up an action for it, so I can have this effect on call whenever I need it.

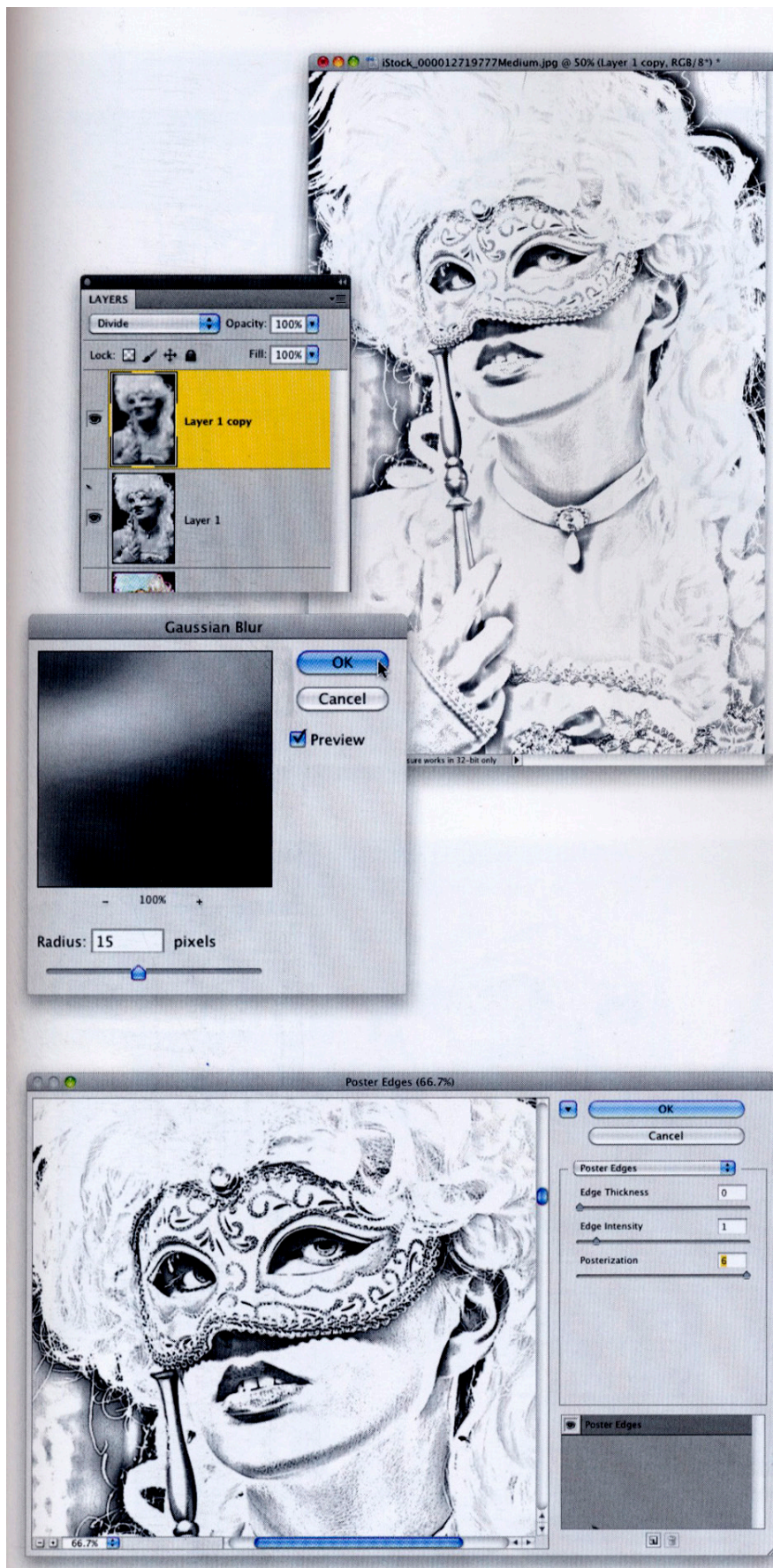
STEP ONE:

Open the image you want to apply the effect to. Here, we have an image that just screams for this effect (you can download and use this image or use one of your own).

STEP TWO:

First, make a duplicate of the Background layer by pressing **Command-J** (PC: **Ctrl-J**). Then, convert the image to black and white using the Gradient Map adjustment by pressing **D** to set your Foreground and Background colors to their defaults of black and white, then going under the Image menu, under Adjustments, and choosing **Gradient Map**. Just click OK in the Gradient Map dialog.





STEP THREE:

Now, make a duplicate of this black-and-white layer and change the duplicate layer's blend mode to **Divide**. This will turn the entire image window white. To bring back detail, go under the Filter menu, under Blur, and choose **Gaussian Blur**. The Radius setting will vary on different images, but in this case, set it to 15 pixels and click OK. As you can see, the image now has a very stylish, almost illustrated, look, but we're not done yet.

STEP FOUR:

Press **Command-E (PC: Ctrl-E)** to merge the two duplicate layers together into one layer. Then, go under the Filter menu again, this time under Artistic, and choose **Poster Edges**. Again, these settings may vary with different images, but here, I set the Edge Thickness to 0, the Edge Intensity to 1, and the Posterization to 6. This will intensify the effect a bit more. Click OK.

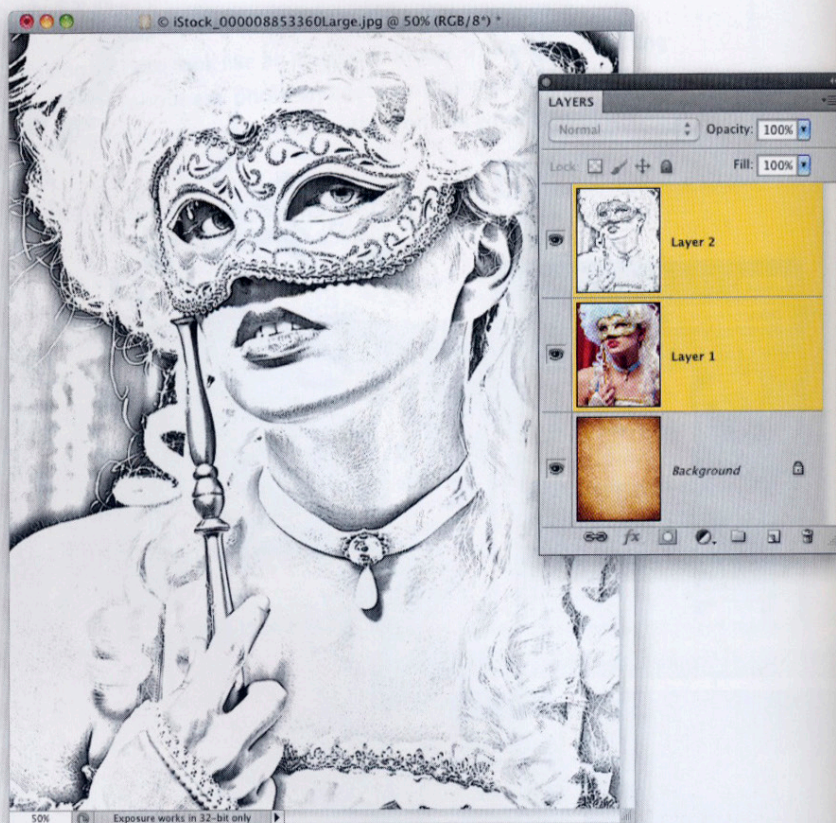
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Photoshop Down & Dirty Tricks for Designers

by Corey Barker

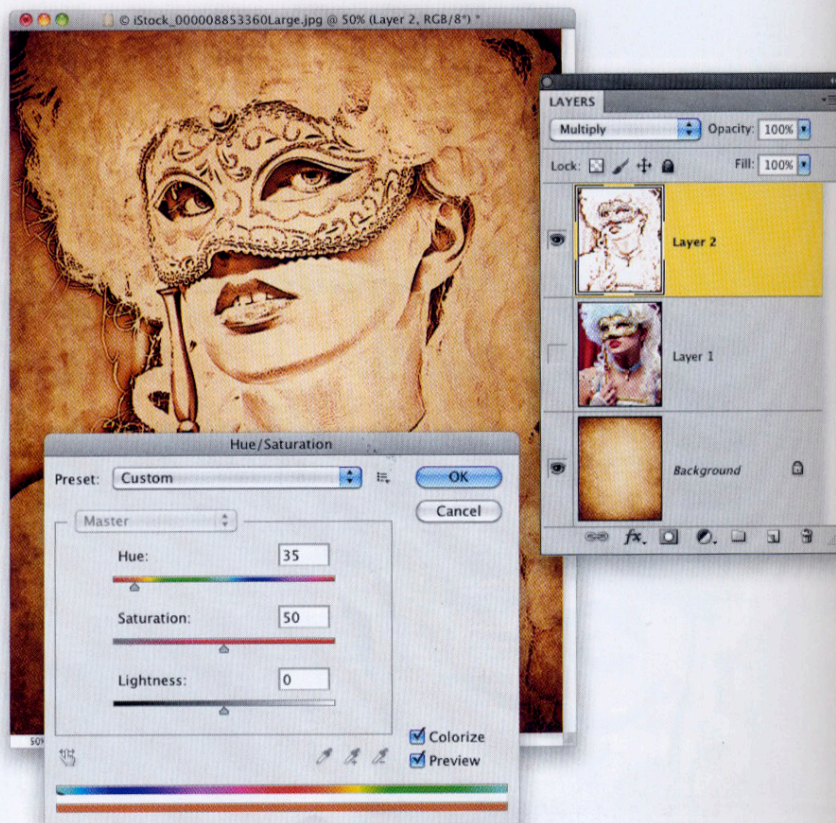
STEP FIVE:

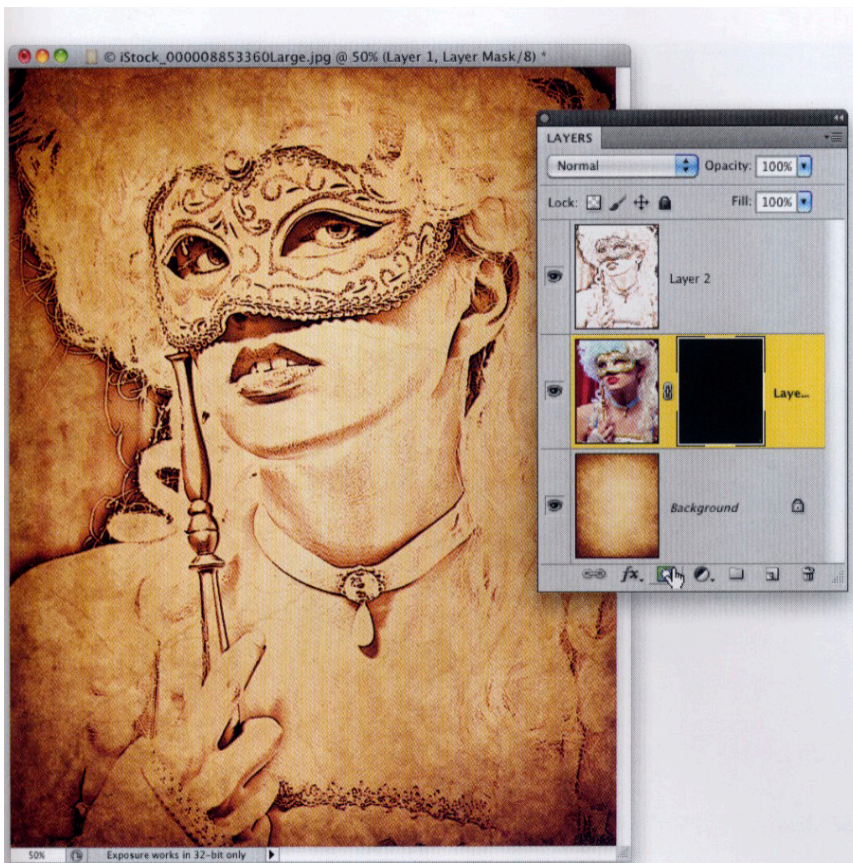
Now, open the texture file to add the illustrated effect to (you can see it here at the bottom of the Layers panel). Then, get the Move tool (**V**), go back to the subject image, Command-click (PC: Ctrl-click) on the processed layer and the original color Background layer, so that they're both selected, and then drag them both onto the texture file. Keep them both selected, press **Command-T** (PC: **Ctrl-T**) to go into Free Transform, then press **Command-0** (zero; **Ctrl-0**), so that you can reach the control handles. Press-and-hold the Shift key and then click-and-drag a corner handle outward to increase their size a bit, so that they fit over the texture image.



STEP SIX:

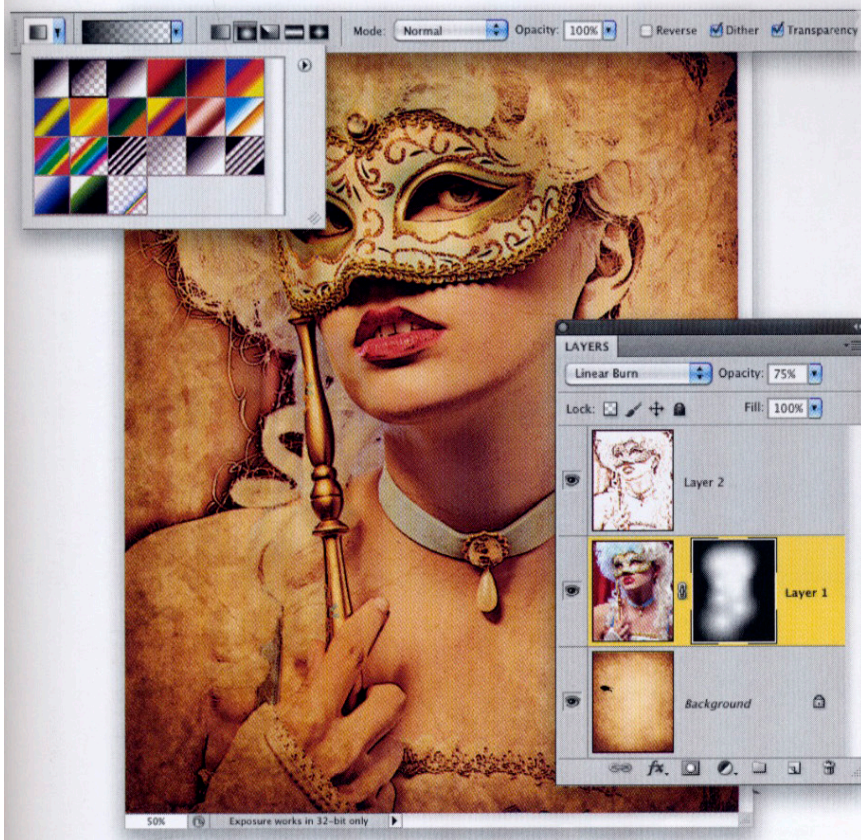
Click on the black-and-white "illustrated" layer to make it active, then press **Command-U** (PC: **Ctrl-U**) to open the Hue/Saturation dialog. Turn on the Colorize checkbox, set the Hue to 35, the Saturation to 50, and leave the Lightness set to 0. Click OK. Now, change the blend mode of this top layer to **Multiply**. Click on the Eye icon to the left of the original color layer beneath the illustrated layer (Layer 1) to hide it and get a better look at how the effect is coming along.





STEP SEVEN:

Now, make the original color layer visible again, and then click on it to make it active. Option-click (PC: Alt-click) on the Add Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers panel to add a black layer mask. This will hide everything on the layer.



STEP EIGHT:

Get the Gradient tool (**G**) from the Toolbox, then in the Options Bar, click on the down-facing arrow to the right of the gradient thumbnail, choose the Foreground to Transparent gradient (the second one from the left in the top row), and then click on the Radial Gradient icon (the second icon to the right of the gradient thumbnail). Make sure the layer mask is selected in the Layers panel, press **X** to set your Foreground color to white, and then, starting in the middle of the face, click-and-drag outward. This will reveal some of the color image, giving the illustrated look some color. Continue to add more gradients around the image in areas you want to see some color. You can stylize the color effect a bit more by changing the layer blend mode to **Linear Burn** and dropping the Opacity down to about 75%.

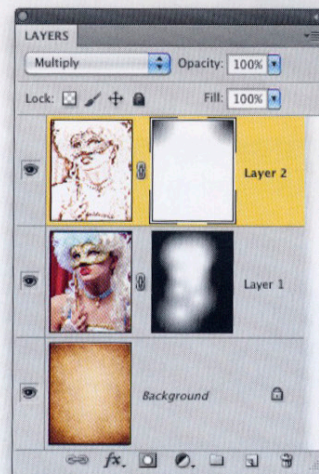
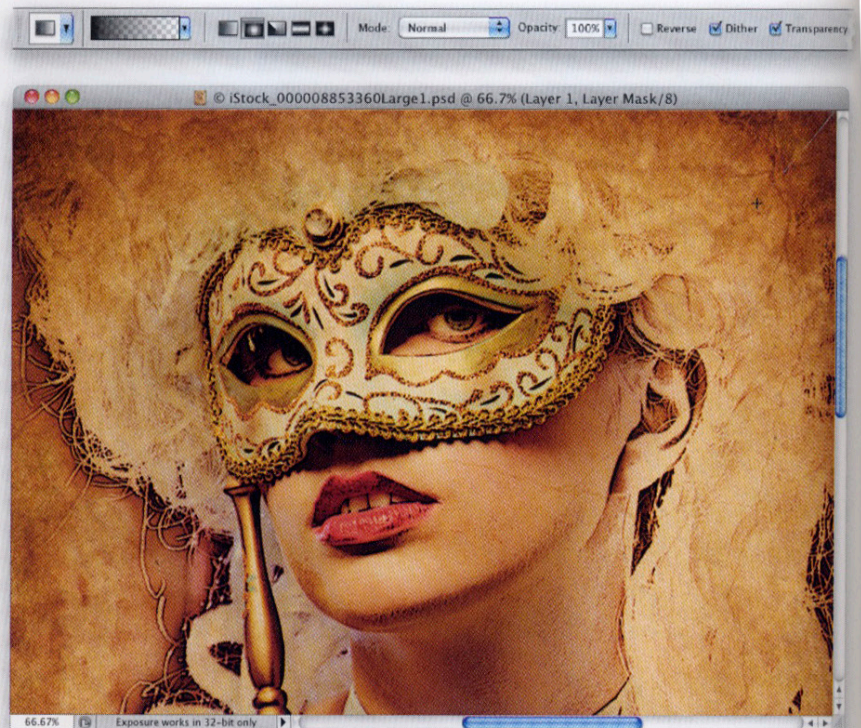
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STEP NINE:

Finally, I clicked on the Add Layer Mask icon again and added a white layer mask to the top illustrated layer. Then, I switched my Foreground color to black and used the Radial Gradient to fade the top corners to make them blend better.



Gritty Texture Composite

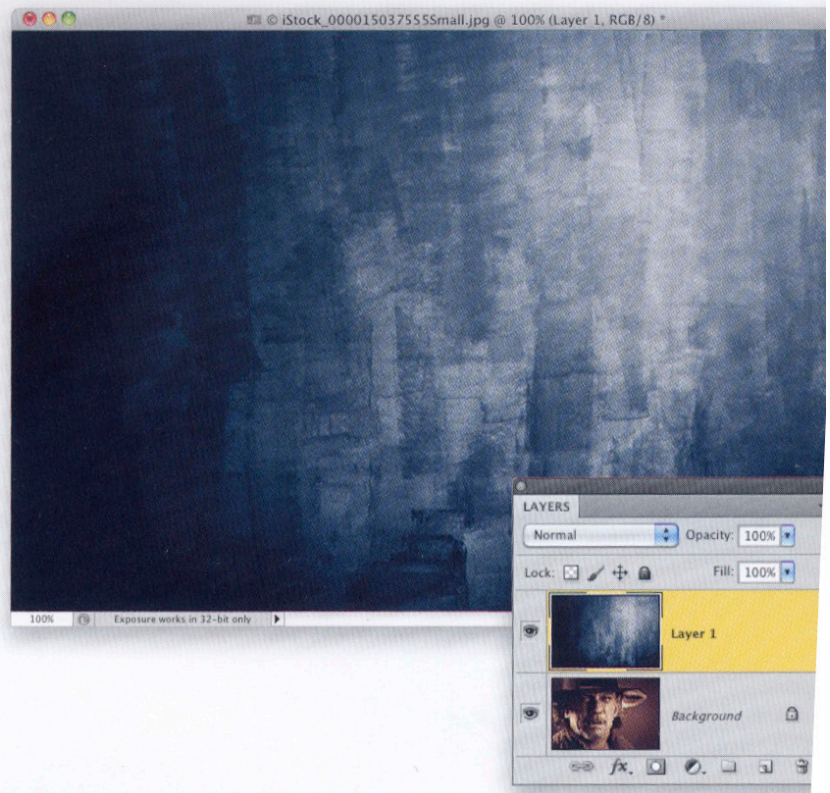
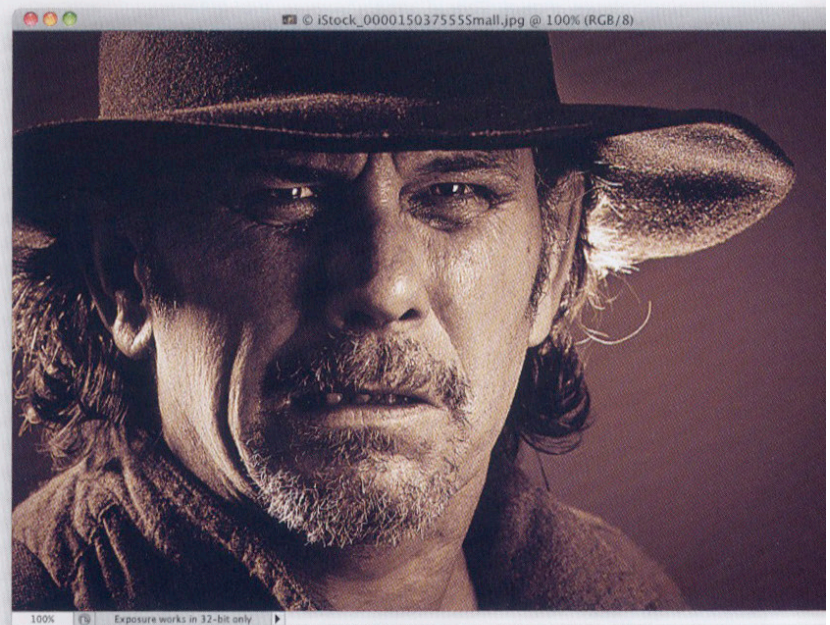
I'm a big fan of textures. I keep a folder of nothing but textures for any occasion. Whether they're from iStock-photo, my own camera, or even my phone, I always like to have a variety on hand. In this project, we'll use a simple texture file to add an element of grit and ruggedness to a photo. Textures can have so many uses beyond their face value; you just have to look at them a little differently.

STEP ONE:

Open the file of the rugged cowboy or any other photo you might like to apply this effect to.

STEP TWO:

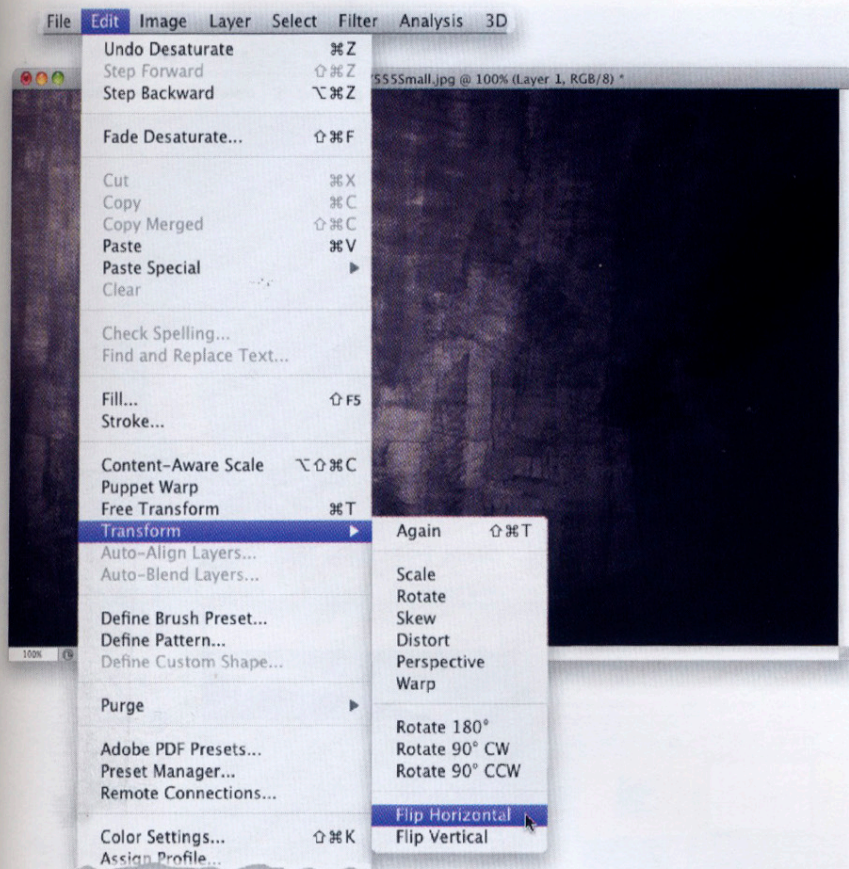
Next, open the texture file you see here. Again, I like to keep a folder of nothing but textures in the event that I need them for whatever reason. Get the Move tool (**V**) from the Toolbox and drag this texture into the cowboy image file. Center it over the cowboy image file. If needed, go into Free Transform (**Command-T** [PC: **Ctrl-T**]), adjust the size of it, and then press **Return** (PC: **Enter**).



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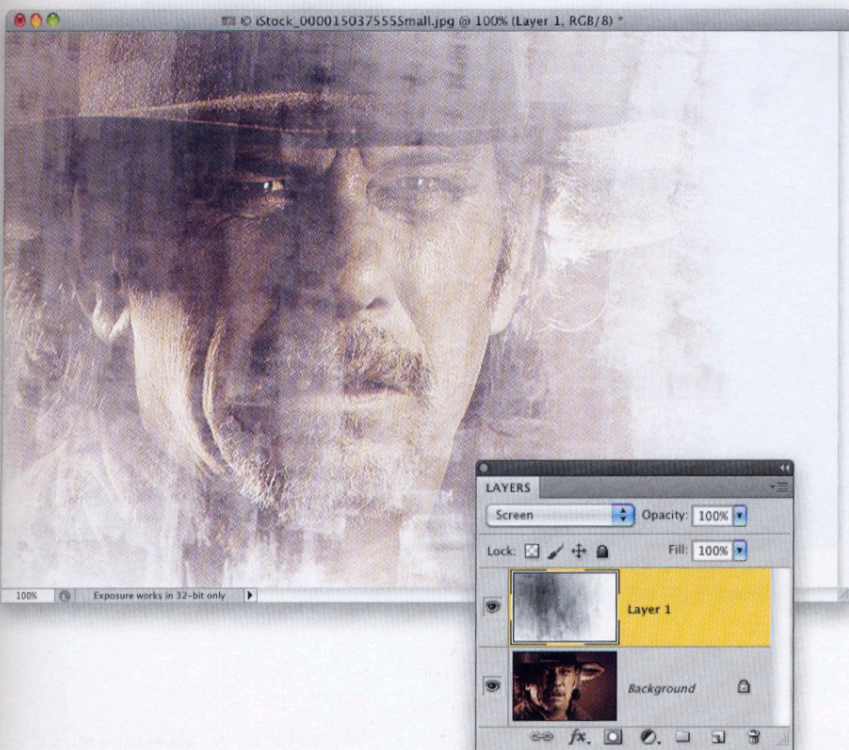
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STEP THREE:

Now, first we need to remove the color from the texture image by pressing **Command-Shift-U (PC: Ctrl-Shift-U)**. Since the cowboy is on the left side of the image, we also need to flip the texture around, so the lighter side of it is on the left side, as well. So, go under the Edit menu, under Transform, and choose **Flip Horizontal**.

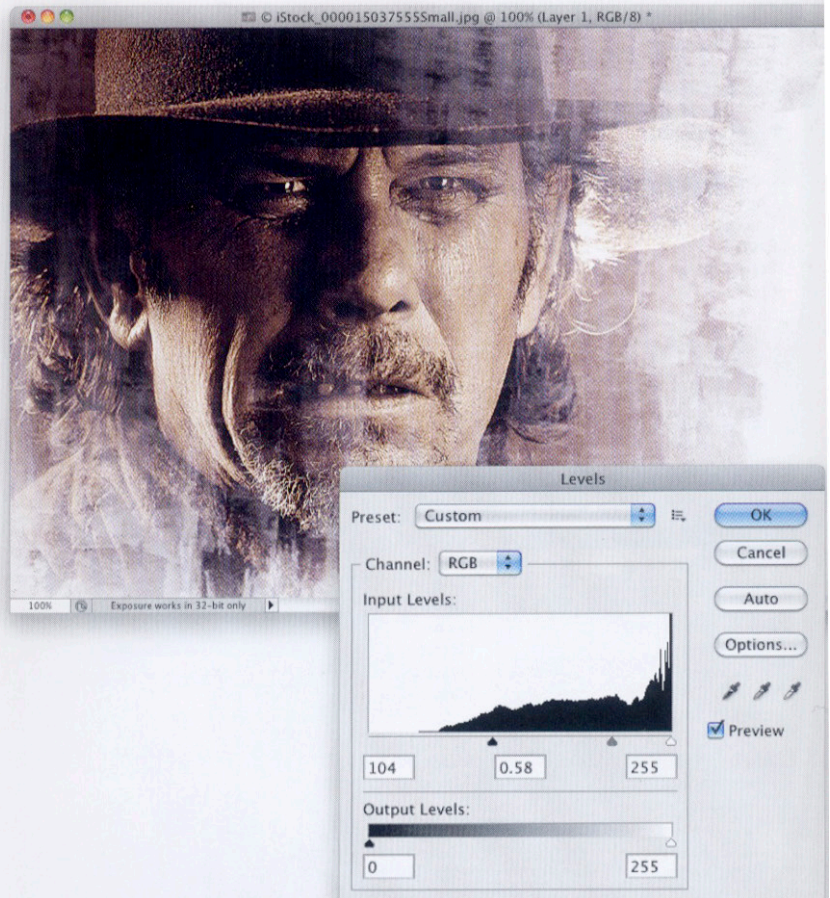


STEP FOUR:

Next, go under the Image menu, under Adjustments, and choose **Invert** to flip the image values. Change the layer's blend mode to **Screen**, making the black areas invisible and revealing the cowboy image below.

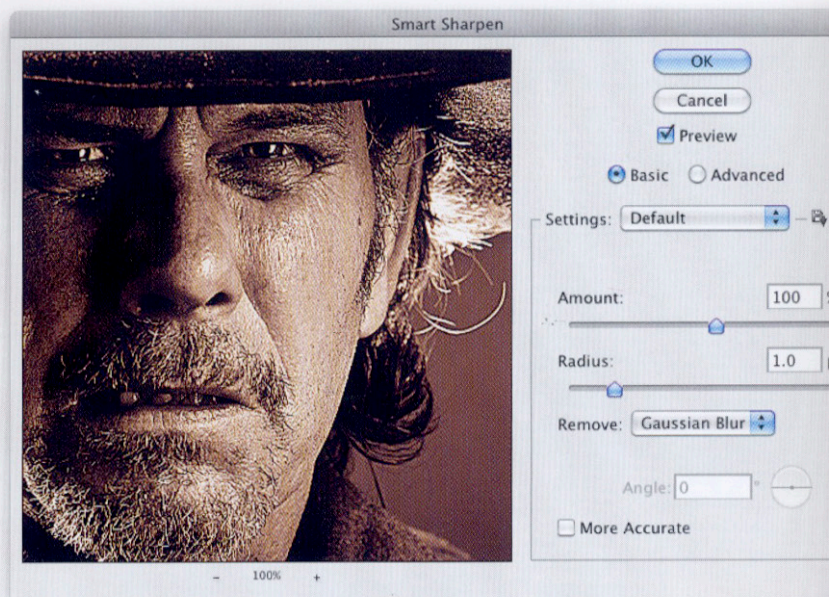
STEP FIVE:

Now, if the texture seems a little overbearing, then you can go under the Image menu, again under Adjustments, and this time choose **Levels**. Run a simple Levels adjustment, like you see here, to darken the black areas.



STEP SIX:

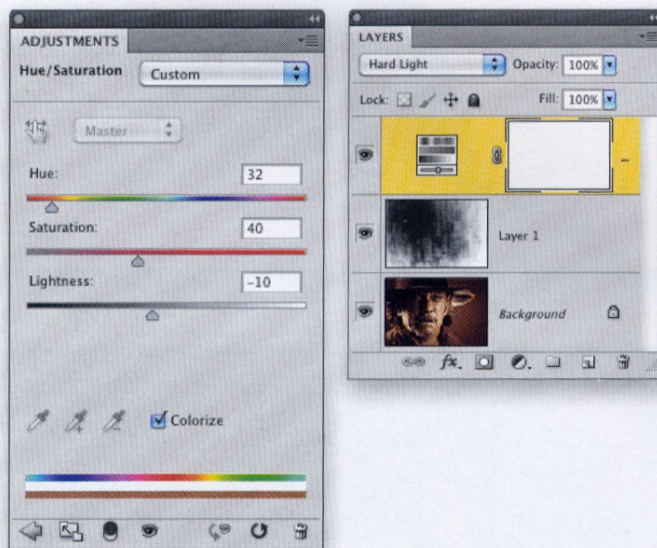
To add an extra element of grit to the cowboy image, click on the Background layer to make it active. Then, go under the Filter menu, under Sharpen, and choose **Smart Sharpen**. Set the Amount to 100%, the Radius to 1 px, and the Remove pop-up menu to **Gaussian Blur**. Click OK when you're done.



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STEP SEVEN:

- To finish this effect, click back on the texture layer in the Layers panel to make it active, then click on the Create New Adjustment Layer icon at the bottom of the panel and choose **Hue/Saturation**. In the Adjustments panel, turn on the Colorize checkbox, then set the Hue to 32, the Saturation to 40, and the Lightness to -10. This will give the image a vintage sepia look. Finally, change the adjustment layer's blend mode to **Hard Light** and, if needed, get the Crop tool (C) and crop the image slightly to remove some of the white background on the right (as you'll see I did in the Final Image).

That's pretty much it. As you play with this technique, be sure to try different textures and colors to get a variety of different looks.

TIP: Photograph Textures

Since textures are often very abstract images, you can use things like the camera on your phone to take pictures of textures when you're out and about. These days, camera phones take pretty decent pictures that you can work with.



Final Image



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In this version, I used two copies of the texture file in different positions, and masked out part of each to cover the area I wanted to show. Then I merged all the layers into a new layer, changed the blend mode to Multiply, and added a new colored texture image below the merged layer.

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